## Buddhist Statues in Kendal England

**14 May 2024**

Buddhist statues associated with BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) have played an important role in the recent history of Kendal on the edge of The Lake District in North West England.

### Wooden Sitting Buddha Statue

Upasaka Sumedha, Bodhicarini Upasika Jayasili (Jacquetta Gomes) and Upasaka Dhammika from BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) led the Prayers before the Kendal Town Council Meeting chaired by the then Mayor of Kendal, Councillor John Anthony Bateson, on 12 April 2010. They chanted the *Metta Sutta* in Pali and Upasaka Sumedha read it in English. They also presented a wooden sitting Buddha statue to The Mayor. BGKT Chair Titus Gomes brought this sitting Buddha statue back from Sri Lanka. As far as BGKT is aware this was the first time a Buddhist Group has chanted a Sutta before a Council meeting in the UK. This Buddha statue was added with other religious artefacts and books, to CCC Cumbria County Council's archives in Kendal at a presentation on behalf of SLEDP South Lakeland Equality and Diversity Partnership attended by Jacquetta Gomes (later SLEDP Lead on Interfaith and Multifaith) on 24 April 2015. Men in Sheds Kendal (the then BGKT Chair Titus Gomes was the first member) at Age UK South Lakeland, made a beautiful wooden stand to hold the books and religious artefacts in the county archives. It is wonderful that the Buddha statue is part of the County's history.

Photographs were taken of the wooden Buddha Rupa after the Council meeting in the Mayor's Parlour.

Photographs were taken at the presentation at CCC archives.

### Copper Standing Buddha Statue

BGKT Buddhist Group of Kendal (Theravada) presented the then Mayor of Kendal Councillor John Anthony Bateson with a copper standing Buddha statue in the Mayor's Parlour Kendal Town Hall on 28 May 2010. The then Chair of BGKT Titus Gomes brought this standing Buddha statue back from Sri Lanka. This Buddha statue was also added to CCC Cumbria County Council's archives in Kendal at the presentation on behalf of SLEDP South Lakeland Equality and Diversity Partnership on 24 April 2015.

The Mayor and Jacquetta Gomes were photographed outside Kendal Town Hall with the standing copper Buddha.

Photographs were taken at the presentation at CCC archives.

### Brass Standing Buddha Statue

The then BGKT Chair Titus Gomes and BGKT secretary Jacquetta Gomes were given money for one of their wedding anniversaries to buy a Buddha statue, and purchased a brass standing Buddha statue on their wedding anniversary. When they looked at Buddha statues in the shop, they had been given exactly the correct sum of money to be able to purchase this Buddha statue. It stands in their house so they see it throughout the day giving us a focus for their lives.

As BGKT does not have its own building BGKT takes this standing Buddha statue to its their annual Vesak Celebration which The Mayor or Deputy Mayor of Kendal usually attend. It is also displayed on the shrine at BGKT's retreats.

BGKT assisted at the wedding of an attendee of the group who has attended since BGKT's first meeting. The wedding was held on 8 July 2017 at Kendal Unitarian Chapel Kendal, led by an Interfaith Minister who was also Kendal Unitarian Chapel's Ministry Team Leader. A Christian Clergyman gave a Gaelic Blessing and a reading from the Bible. The brass standing Buddha statue was displayed in the Chapel which was decorated with Tibetan Prayer flags.

As far as BGKT is aware this is the first wedding in Kendal which included a Buddhist blessing and Buddhist chanting by a Buddhist Group. Bodhicarini Upasika Jayasili (Jacquetta Gomes) gave a wedding blessing in Pali and English. Upasaka Sumedha gave *Panca Sila* (Five Precepts). BGKT attendees who have taken the *Ajivatthamaka Sila* (Eight Precepts with Right Livelihood as the Eighth) for Life chanted these Precepts. Upasaka Sumedha read The Mangala Sutta and BGKT chanted this in Pali. The then BGKT Chair Titus Gomes led a *metta* meditation (meditation on loving kindness). Upasaka Dhammika gave a reading by The Dalai Lama.

Photographs were taken in the Chapel which include the brass standing Buddha statue and Tibetan Prayer flags. A photograph of the brass Buddha statue was included in the wedding invitation leaflet issued by the Unitarian Chapel in Kendal.

Wooden Stand

CCC Cumbria County Council's Archives in Kendal Presentation of Religious Artefacts and Books on behalf of SLEDP South Lakeland Equality and Diversity Partnership 24 April 2015

Presentation of Wooden Buddha Statue Mayors Parlour Kendal Town Hall 12 April 2010

Presentation of Copper Buddha Statue Kendal Town Hall

28 May 2010

Standing Buddha Statue

Standing Buddha Statue at BGKT Vesak 16 May 2022

Standing Buddha Statue at Wedding at Kendal Unitarian Chapel 8 July 2017

Standing Buddha Statue at Wedding at Kendal Unitarian Chapel 8 July 2017